

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Sub E 17
Claims 1 -57 (Canceled).

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58. (Previously Presented) In a client system comprising a display for simultaneously showing video programs received from one or more video sources and chat communication corresponding to the received video programs, wherein the client system is capable of connecting to one or more host servers of one or more service providers and one or more chat servers offering one or more chat rooms, a method of a service provider controlling a client system's access to one or more chat rooms that have been associated with a particular video program, comprising:

at the client system, receiving a video program from a video source;
displaying the video program at the client system;
receiving chat link data from the service provider indicating that the client system may display a user selectable chat link for connecting to a chat room that is associated with the video program;
displaying the user selectable chat link simultaneously with the video program;
upon receiving user selection of the chat link, sending a chat request to a host server;
receiving a chat room identifier from the host server that identifies the available chat room associated with the video program and a chat server; and
automatically connecting the client system with the chat room that is associated with the video program using the chat room identifier received from the host server.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, wherein the host and chat servers are the same server.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, wherein the video program and the chat link data are received in a signal broadcast from the video source.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, wherein the video program is displayed in a video region of the display and text communications are displayed in a chat region of the display.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the chat region of the display is adjacent the video region of the display.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the chat region of the display overlies the video region of the display.

64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 61, wherein a chat user interface displayed in the chat region is customized based on one or more of (i) an episode of a television series included in the video program, (ii) a television series corresponding to the video program, (iii) a television network affiliate providing the video program, and (iv) a network providing the video program.

65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 61, wherein an identifying characteristic of the video program is displayed outside of the video region of the display.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65, wherein the identifying characteristic identifies an episode of a television series included in the video program.

67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65, wherein the identifying characteristic identifies a television series corresponding to the video program.

68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65, wherein the identifying characteristic identifies a television network affiliate providing the video program.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65, wherein the identifying characteristic identifies a television network providing the video program.

70. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65, wherein the identifying characteristic includes a background underlying other displayed data.

71. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, further comprising the steps of:
determining an identifying characteristic of the video program; and
defining a user interface for display of text communications, the user interface being configured to reflect an identifying characteristic of the video program.

72. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the user interface includes a predefined chat region for display of the text communications.

73. (Previously Presented) For a client system comprising a display for simultaneously showing video programs received from one or more video sources and chat communication corresponding to the received video programs, wherein the client system is capable of connecting to one or more host servers of one or more service providers and one or more chat servers offering one or more chat rooms, a computer program product comprising computer-executable instructions for implementing a method of a service provider controlling a client system's access to one or more chat rooms that have been associated with a particular video program, the method comprising:

at the client system, receiving a video program from a video source;

displaying the video program at the client system;

receiving chat link data from the service provider indicating that the client system may display a user selectable chat link for connecting to a chat room that is associated with the video program;

displaying the user selectable chat link simultaneously with the video program;

upon receiving user selection of the chat link, sending a chat request to a host server;

receiving a chat room identifier from the host server that identifies the available chat room associated with the video program and a chat server; and

automatically connecting the client system with the chat room that is associated with the video program using the chat room identifier received from the host server.

74. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 73, wherein the host and chat servers are the same server.

75. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 73, wherein the video program and the chat link data are received in a signal broadcast from the video source.

76. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 73, the method further comprising displaying the video program in a video region of the display and text communications in a chat region of the display.

77. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein the chat region of the display is adjacent the video region of the display.

78. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein the chat region of the display overlies the video region of the display.

79. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein an identifying characteristic of the video program is displayed outside of the video region of the display.

80. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 79, wherein the identifying characteristic identifies an episode of a television series included in the video program.

81. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 79, wherein the identifying characteristic identifies a television series corresponding to the video program.

82. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 79, wherein the identifying characteristic identifies a television network affiliate providing the video program.

83. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 79, wherein the identifying characteristic identifies a television network providing the video program.

84. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 79, wherein the identifying characteristic includes a background underlying other displayed data.

85. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 73, the method further comprising:

determining an identifying characteristic of the video program; and
defining a user interface for display of text communications, the user interface being configured to reflect the identifying characteristic of the video program.

86. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 85, wherein the user interface includes a predefined chat region for display of the text communications.

87. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 86, wherein the user interface includes a predefined video region for display of the video program.

88. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the chat region of the display is adjacent the video region of the display.

89. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the chat region of the display overlies the video region of the display.

90. (Previously Presented) The graphical user interface of claim 27, wherein the chat region of the display is adjacent the video region of the display.

91. (Previously Presented) The graphical user interface of claim 27, wherein the chat region of the display overlies the video region of the display.

92. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 58, wherein the video program has a beginning and an end, and further including an act of displaying a new chat link with the video program, and prior to the end of the video program, the new chat link linking to new chat room that is associated with a different video program.

93. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 58, wherein the chat room is maintained by the chat server only until the user leaves the chat room, wherein the user is determined to be a last participant to leave the chat room.

94. (New) In a client system comprising a display for simultaneously showing video programs received from one or more video sources and chat communication corresponding to the received video programs, wherein the client system is capable of connecting to one or more host servers of one or more service providers and one or more chat servers offering one or more chat rooms, a method of a service provider controlling a client system's access to one or more chat rooms that have been associated with a particular video program, comprising:

at the client system, receiving a video program from a video source;

displaying the video program at the client system;

receiving chat link data from the service provider indicating that the client system may display a user selectable chat link for connecting to a chat room that is associated with the video program;

displaying the user selectable chat link simultaneously with the video program;

upon receiving user selection of the chat link, sending a chat request to a host server;

receiving a chat room identifier from the host server that identifies the available chat room associated with the video program and a chat server;

automatically connecting the client system with the chat room that is associated with the video program using the chat room identifier received from the host server;

receiving a user interface template identifying characteristic with the video program that identifies one of a plurality of distinct user interface templates available at the client system, each of which defines at least a video region for displaying the video program and a chat region for displaying text communication; and

displaying any received or sent chat communication based on the identified user interface template.

95. (New) The method of claim 94, wherein the host and chat servers are the same server.

96. (New) The method of claim 94, wherein the video program and the chat link data are received in a signal broadcast from the video source.

97. (New) The method of claim 94, wherein the video program is displayed in the video region of the display and text communications are displayed in the chat region of the display.

98. (New) The method of claim 94, wherein a chat user interface displayed in the chat region is customized based on one or more of (i) an episode of a television series included in the video program, (ii) a television series corresponding to the video program, (iii) a television network affiliate providing the video program, and (iv) a network providing the video program.

99. (New) For a client system comprising a display for simultaneously showing video programs received from one or more video sources and chat communication corresponding to the received video programs, wherein the client system is capable of connecting to one or more host servers of one or more service providers and one or more chat servers offering one or more chat rooms, a computer program product comprising computer-executable instructions for implementing a method of a service provider controlling a client system's access to one or more chat rooms that have been associated with a particular video program, the method comprising:

at the client system, receiving a video program from a video source;
displaying the video program at the client system;
receiving chat link data from the service provider indicating that the client system may display a user selectable chat link for connecting to a chat room that is associated with the video program;
displaying the user selectable chat link simultaneously with the video program;
upon receiving user selection of the chat link, sending a chat request to a host server;
receiving a chat room identifier from the host server that identifies the available chat room associated with the video program and a chat server;
automatically connecting the client system with the chat room that is associated with the video program using the chat room identifier received from the host server;
receiving a user interface template identifying characteristic with the video program that identifies one of a plurality of distinct user interface templates available at the client system, each of which defines at least a video region for displaying the video program and a chat region for displaying text communication; and
displaying any received or sent chat communication based on the identified user interface template.

100. (New) The computer program product of claim 99, wherein the host and chat servers are the same server.

101. (New) The computer program product of claim 99, wherein the video program and the chat link data are received in a signal broadcast from the video source.

102. (New) The computer program product of claim 99, the method further comprising displaying the video program in the video region of the display and text communications in the chat region of the display.

103. (New) The computer program product of claim 99, wherein the video program has a beginning and an end, and further including an act of displaying a new chat link with the video program, and prior to the end of the video program, the new chat link linking to new chat room that is associated with a different video program.

104. (New) The computer program product of claim 99, wherein the chat room is maintained by the chat server only until the user leaves the chat room, wherein the user is determined to be a last participant to leave the chat room.
